

habit of flying at dusk may have confused people, who are, generally speaking, not interested in moths. In the Cape Peninsula *dysmephila* appears to breed all the year round, but the main breeding season is during summer. C. W. Wykeham caught a fresh specimen when it was at rest on a Banana plant in his garden at about 2.30p.m., on 16th June, 1984. The butterfly can be reared easily from any of the early stages. The larvae, however, need to be supplied with fresh palm leaves of the right kind. For the complete life-history, with beautiful illustrations in colour, see Clark, *loc. cit.* One of the most striking habits of the larvae of *dysmephila* is the manner in which they construct a shelter. After eating the egg-shell the larva commences, very soon, to construct a shelter for itself near the end of a leaf, the halves of which are brought together with silken strands. They are not, however, pulled together by the larva, the process being a gradual one through, apparently, the contraction of the successive strands of silk. The extremity of the leaf is first eaten, and the larva then moves down the leaf, extending the shelter as it does so. Finally, it should be stated that there are no indigenous palms in the Cape Peninsula. The Date Palm, which is so common here today, was presumably introduced by the early Dutch settlers, possibly centuries ago.

References

Clark, G. C., 1978, in *Pennington's Butterflies of Southern Africa*, Edited by C. G. C. Dickson, with the collaboration of Dr. D. M. Kroon. Ad. Donker, Johannesburg.

De Villiers, A. L. and McDowell, C. R., 1982. The indigenous exotic vegetation of Table Mountain. *African Wildlife*, **36** (3) : 120.

Trimen, Roland. 1889. *S. A. Butt.* III : 327-29. (Contains most interesting observations on the habits of the species by Colonel J. H. Bowker, in the Eastern Cape (as previously constituted) and Natal.)



RECENT INCREASE IN LEUCOMA SALICIS L. (WHITE SATIN MOTH) IN HEREFORD — I have run an m.v. light in Hereford City since 1973 and the numbers of this insect have increased dramatically over this period, as the following records show. The number of individuals is given in brackets : 1973-1977 (0) : 1978 (1) ; 1979 (2) ; 1980-1982 (0) ; 1983 (17) : 1984 (70), with 35 on July 5th ; 1985 (68) with 31 on July 8th.

My orchard on the banks of the River Wye would seem an ideal habitat with a large variety of willows and poplars. Dr. M. Harper tells me that he has noticed an increase in this species in his garden near Ledbury. Is this phenomenon local or more widespread? — Dr. B. E. MILES, 68 Hampton Park Road, Hereford, HR1 1TJ.